

Members of the Royal Family and Mašrû-ḥamiš the Scribe: a Chronological Link between the Archives from Ekalte and Emar*

Miembros de la familia real y el escriba Mašrû-ḥamiš: un posible enlace cronológico entre los archivos de Ekalte y Emar*

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Fecha de recepción: 20.11.2013
Fecha de aceptación: 14.02.2014

ABSTRACT

One of the most debated questions –if not the most debated– regarding the Ekalte/Tall Munbāqa archive is that of chronology. The principal proposals have been made by Mayer (2001: 15-19) and Werner (2004: 23-24), who arrived at different conclusions in their respective studies. Nevertheless, it has been commonly accepted that the texts from Ekalte are older than those from nearby Emar/Tall Meškene. This paper proposes some prosopographical links between the Syrian-type tablets from Ekalte and Emar, an attempt to establish a chronological relationship between both archives.

KEY WORDS: Ekalte, Emar, chronology, Syria, Euphrates

RESUMEN

Uno de los aspectos más debatidos del archivo de Ekalte/Tall Munbāqa, si no el que más, es el de su cronología. Las propuestas principales han sido recogidas por Mayer (2001: 15-19) y Werner (2004: 23-24) en sus respectivos trabajos, cada uno llegando a diferentes conclusiones. Sin embargo, se suele aceptar que los textos de Ekalte son más antiguos que los de la vecina Emar/Tall Meškene. Este artículo propone una serie de enlaces prosopográficos entre las tablillas sirias de Ekalte y Emar, en un intento de vincular la cronología de ambos archivos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Ekalte, Emar, cronología, Siria, Éufrates

* This article was written in the framework of my PhD dissertation *Late Bronze Age Ekalte. Chronology, Society, and Religion of a Town in the Land of Aštata*, defended in Albacete on Sept. 6, 2012. I am deeply indebted to my director J. C. Oliva and my tutor J. A. Belmonte, as well as the members of the Examining Committee, namely J. Sanmartín, J. Córdoba, L. Feliu, R. Pruzsinszky, and J. P. Vita, for their contributions, essential for the writing of this paper.

1. STATUS QUAESTIONIS¹

The archive of Emar presents two main, local scribal traditions, what has led to distinguish between Syrian and Syro-Hittite tablets². On the other hand, the tablets from Ekalte belong exclusively to the Syrian tradition. Therefore, an attempt to establish a chronological match between both archives must take into account only the Emar Syrian-type tablets, and exclude the Syro-Hittite texts, which were written at a later stage after the Syrian tradition was abandoned.

1.1. The Controversial *Tu*

In order to date the Ekalte archive, Mayer searched for LBA conflicts which could explain the presence of a destruction layer covering the tablet-giving stratum at Munbāqa. He eventually opted for the Egypt-Mitanni conflict in the mid-15th century, in which Tuthmosis III's eighth campaign took place. Mayer based his proposal on reading the eponym year in Ek 80:32 as follows: MU BA.DU ^mTu "Year in which Tu(dḫaliya) arrived" [*"Jahr, nachdem Tu(tḫaliya) gekommen ist"*]. ^mTu is interpreted as an abbreviation of Tudḫaliya I, based on the same use of ^mTu for that king's name in other Hittite text³ (Mayer, 1988: 49-50; Mayer, 1990: 55-57, 65-66). Since Tuthmosis III's eighth campaign took place ca. 1446 BC and the Ekalte texts covered a span of four generations, Mayer proposed dating the texts ca. 1530-1446 BC⁴.

This theory has been widely discarded, though. Wilcke proposed the much more likely reading MU Ba (*IMa?*)-da(*IDu?*) 1^{KAM.MA}, based on Emar's eponym years system (Wilcke, 1992: 124; Sallaberger, 2003: 277). The formula for Emarite eponym years is MU PN₁ (DUMU PN₂) 1/2^{KAM.MA} "Year of PN₁ (son of PN₂), 1st/2nd (year)"⁵. In Ekalte, this formula is found only in Ek 80:32, what could mean that the tablet was actually written in Emar –and thus dated in the Emarite way–, being afterwards carried to Ekalte. Neither Bada nor Mada/u are attested elsewhere in the Ekalte texts, although this does not have to mean that they did

1 Abbreviations: ASJ 10=Tsukimoto 1988. AuOr5=Arnaud 1987. TSBR=Arnaud 1991. BLMJ=Westenholz 2000. CD-ROM=CD-ROM incorporated to Pruzsinszky 2003. E=Arnaud 1985-1987. Ek=Mayer 2001. FK=Sigrist 1993. Had=Tall Hadidi texts, according to the online edition by Whiting on <http://www.helsinki.fi/~whiting/hadidcat.html> (last visited August 2014). HCCT-E=Tsukimoto 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994. Iraq54=Dalley, Teissier 1992. KBo=*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. Leipzig, Berlin, 1916. LBA=Late Bronze Age. MBQ III=Werner 2004. PN=Personal Name. RA 77=Huehnergard 1983. RE=Beckman 1996. SCCNH=Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians. SMEA=Arnaud 1992.

2 According to Cohen (2012: 33-38; 2009: 28-31), Syrian-type texts are older, following the tradition of the Middle and Upper Euphrates area in the Middle Bronze Age: elongated and narrow shape, Post-Old Babylonian script, etcetera. On the other hand, Syro-Hittite-type tablets have the shape of a bar of soap and a script closer to Middle Babylonian running along its horizontal axis. Cohen remarks that both types also differ in sealing practices, dating systems, and legal formulae. Given the strong Hittite influence on the second type, the tablets must have been elaborated after the Hittite conquest of the territory.

3 Mayer also took into account a scarab-like ornament from the New Kingdom period found at the 1974 Munbāqa campaign (Orthman, 1976: 42-43).

4 Pruzsinszky (2004: 49) observes that this dating presents an unsolved problem: the layer where the tablets were found should be laying over another destruction layer caused by Muršili I's campaign on his way to Babylon during the 16th century.

5 According to Yamada (1996: 299-300), each eponym year covered a period of two years. The eponym dates of Emar and Ekalte, with two-year terms, are unique all over the Middle Euphrates (Fleming, 2008: 37). For Emarite eponym years, see Fleming, 2000: 205.

not exist⁶. On the other hand, the PN Bada occurs at Emar (RE 88:22; TSBP 26:10,18; RA 77 3:1,25,25d; RA 77 5:1), as Beckman points out⁷.

Notwithstanding Wilcke's theory, Mayer persevered on his dating proposal when he published his remarkable study on the Ekalte tablets (Mayer, 2001: 15, n. 55). However, authors like Sallaberger, Pruzsinszky or Beckman remain skeptical and support Wilcke. Beckman, for instance, finds the use of the abbreviation for Tudḫaliya I "extremely unlikely", arguing that, even though *Tu* was a common abbreviation for the conqueror in Luwian sources from Boğazköy, it is doubtful that Ekaltians used it to mention a foreign king⁸. Pruzsinszky adds that there is no evidence that Tudḫaliya I ever crossed the Euphrates in his Syrian campaigns. Likewise, Ekalte is not mentioned on the 7th pylon in Karnak, where the Syrian sites conquered by Tuthmosis III are listed (Pruzsinszky, 2009: 175).

Given a reading MU *Ba(Ima⁷)-da(Idu⁷)* 1^{KAM.MA}, a chronology ca. 1530-1446 BC for the Ekalte tablets must be rejected, since no evidence of Tudḫaliya I or Tuthmosis III is supplied by the tablets. According to scholars' general opinion, the texts are to be located at a period closer in time to the Emar archive.

1.2. Eponym years

The few examples of eponym years in Ekalte (*fig. 1*) usually refer to local mayors, what does not help us establish a chronological match with the Emar system. The few Ekalte eponymous years usually employ the formula MU PN₁ (DUMU PN₂ ^{LU}*ḫa-za-an-nu*), what leads to believe that it was part of the local custom to name years after mayors in charge⁹. On the other hand, it is interesting to find a namesake of the Emar royal house in Ek 79:6', as will be discussed below¹⁰. Yamada observes that Emarite eponym years appear at the end of the documents following the witness list (Yamada, 1996: 300). In contrast, Ekalte eponym years appear either at the end of the text –even after the scribe's name– or immediately before the witness list.

These year attestations are used only in Syrian-type texts; the eponym dating system was not used by Syro-Hittite scribes¹¹. Apart from the eponym years, an interesting kind of year names is present in both Syrian and Syro-Hittite-type tablets. Yamada catalogues them as *nukurtu* ("hostility, war") and/or *dannatu* ("hardship, distress, famine") years, depending on how they are termed at the tablet¹². They are suspected to refer to the siege suffered by

6 In fact, some of the Ekaltian mayors are attested once only (e.g. Arnubar, Ek 28:16).

7 Beckman, 2008: 212, n. 10. See also CD-ROM: 174. This means that the PN Bada was used in the area and could be found in Ekalte. Note, however, that the PN Bada from Emar appears only in Syro-Hittite-type tablets.

8 Beckman, 2008: 212, n. 10. In addition, Klinger (1995: 245) points out that this abbreviation is attested solely for Tudḫaliya IV.

9 Although Arnubar (Ek 28:16) is not explicitly termed *ḫazannu*, the other examples suggest that he held this post (see *fig. 1*), Mayer 2001: 24.

10 The mayor Ba'la-malik in Ekalte (Ek 48:37; Ek 79:6') is suspected to have belonged to the royal family (see *below*). No Emarite eponym years contain royal names.

11 Cohen, 2009: 36. For a catalog of Emar year names and eponyms, see Pruzsinszky, 2003: 14-20.

12 (1) Year of *nukurtu* (& *dannatu*: E 111:36; AuOr5 7:21; Iraq54 2:33; TSBP 9:21. (2) Year of *dannatu* (& *nukurtu*: E 20:14,29; HCCT-E 16:14; AuOr5 15:15; possibly BLMJ 21:19. (3) Year of *nukurtu*: E 256:10. (4) Year of *dannatu*: E 83:3; E 86:4; E 121:1; E 138:11,24,41; E 139:42; E 158:14; E 196:2'; E 216:7; ASJ 10 C:8'; ASJ 10 E:1; HCCT-E 37:5; AuOr5 12:3; FK 2:1-2; SMEA 9:6; TSBP 44:2; TSBP 48:33; TSBP 52:5; TSBP 57:18; TSBP 58:15; TSBP 65:6; TSBP 74:7. Yamada, 1996: 298; see also Zaccagnini, 1995: 96-97 and Eph'al, 2009: 135-143.

Emar sometime after the Hittite conquest of the Middle Euphrates (ca. 1325). No attestations of these year names are recorded in Ekalte, but they give testimony of a series of violent events which could be the cause of the Ekalte destruction layer.

Ek	Formula	Year
28:16	MU ^{KAM} ^m Ar-nu-bar DUMU Šu-li-ia	Year of Arnubar, son of Šuliya
48:37	MU ša ^m dEN-ma-lik ^{LÚ} [ḫa-za-an-nu]	Year of Ba'la-malik, ḫazannu
79:6'	[MU ša ^m dEN-ma-lik] DUMU ^d IŠKUR-GAL	Year of of Ba'la-malik, s. IŠKUR-kabar
80:32	MU Ba-da 1 ^{KAM.MA}	1st year of Bada?
93:30-31	MU ^m Mu-uḫ-ra-a-ḫi ^{LÚ} ḫa-za-an-nu	Year of Muḫra-aḫī, ḫazannu

Fig. 1: Eponyms in Ekalte

1.3. Werner's Chronological Proposals

After identifying MBQ III 4585 (in Ek 25) and E2a (After Beyer, 2001: 208) –the oldest seal of Emar's second dynasty– as the same seal, Werner considered the following chronological alternatives (Werner, 2004: 24) for the Ekalte archive:

(1) ca. 1340-1265 BC, by which the destruction of Ekalte is placed by the time of the siege suffered by Emar (see *below*). Despite admitting it was tempting, Werner discarded this option due to the lack of Syro-Hittite-type tablets in Ekalte.

(2) ca. 1400-1325 BC, blaming Šuppiluliuma I for the destruction of Ekalte during his triumphal campaign.

(3) ca. 1530-1446 BC., i.e. Mayer's chronological proposal for Ekalte. Werner discarded it, since he disagreed with Mayer's reading of Ek 80:32.

Considering all three options, Werner chose no. 2 (ca. 1400-1325) as the most appropriate, although he warned that more tablets are needed to be certain about this chronological proposal.

The seal MBQ III 4585 = E2a is impressed on Ek 25, a poorly-preserved text¹³. E2a is the oldest among the Emar dynastic seals and has been ascribed to the so-called Generation 0 of the Emar second dynasty. Generation 0 belongs to the era of IŠKUR-kabar¹⁴, the father of king Yaši-Dagān (see *fig. 3*). However, the seals were used mainly by Generations I and II¹⁵. Werner suggests that Ek 25 should be linked to the time of IŠKUR-kabar, Yaši-Dagān's father, since he is supposed to have been the owner of the cylinder seal imprinted on the tablet¹⁶.

Given that the beginning of Yaši-Dagān's reign has been set ca. 1330-1325, his father owning the seal would support Werner's first dating option for the Ekalte archive (ca. 1340-

13 The document consists of a sale of two female slaves, as well as the manumission of a third one called Rašap-palila.

14 Viano (2007: 246-247) supports the original reading of the name of Yaši-Dagān's father as IŠKUR-kabar, instead of IŠKUR-malik, as Skaist (1998: 59, n. 35) proposed before. Yaši-Dagān's father was supposed to be mentioned in RE 2:24 and RE 34:29, but Viano rejects the latter as a mention of the king. Instead, he suggests that RE 34:29 concerns a different person (Ya-ši'-dGIR, probably some Yaši-Rašap).

15 See chart in Beyer, 2001: 432-435.

16 Werner, 2004: 23. See also Beyer, 2001: 208-209: seals E2a-E2d.

1265). However, Werner preferred the second option. Since further discussion is in order, we will now turn to consider whether a more recent chronology for the Ekalte corpus should be proposed.

2. KINGS IN EKALTE AND MEMBERS OF THE EMAR ROYAL FAMILY

2.1. Kings IŠKUR-kabar and Yaḥṣi-Ba'la from Ekalte

IŠKUR-kabar (Ek 1:9, 11; Ek 24:18) and Yaḥṣi-Ba'la (Ek 9:27; Ek 70:1,7,20), together with an unknown king who could well have been any of them both (LUGAL, Ek 7:22), are the only royal figures mentioned at the Ekalte tablets. Yaḥṣi-Ba'la's son, named Zū-Ba'la (Ek 9:35; Ek 49:1), is hence suspected to have been a prince and, perhaps, his father's successor. However, no such attestation is recorded (Beckman, 2008: 213; Pruzsinszky, 2008: 76; Mayer, 2001: 14). IŠKUR-kabar and Yaḥṣi-Ba'la are suspected to have belonged to the Emar royal house, since no palatial structure has been discovered at Tall Munbāqa up to date¹⁷. The existence of a ruling dynasty in Emar, together with the use of one of the dynastic seals in Ek 25, seems to support the theory which connects IŠKUR-kabar and Yaḥṣi-Ba'la to the Emar dynasties.

2.1.1. IŠKUR-kabar

As Fleming remarks (2008: 32, n. 17), it is tempting to establish a link between the Ekaltian IŠKUR-kabar and the two or three Emarite kings from the second dynasty named IŠKUR-kabar, since all are written ^dIŠKUR-GAL/*ka-bar*. Fleming adds the possibility that the kings from Ekalte belonged to the previous dynasty but slightly earlier than the known monarchs, although no ruler named Yaḥṣi-Ba'la is attested in Emar. The Emar kings would then have adopted traditional royal names such as ^dIŠKUR-kabar¹⁸.

One of the main indicators to determine whether these kings were Emarite or Ekaltian could be the actual role assumed by the king. The king of Emar is presumed to have been some kind of *primus inter pares* (Otto, 2008: 717; Démare-Lafont, 2008: 208; Van Exel, 2010: 67-68). However, the main authority in the city was apparently reserved for the council of Elders, representing the city itself, at least during the first dynasty. Thus, the “king” (LUGAL) would play an administrative-like role, rather than a ruling one.

Considering that these two kings could actually be part of any of the Emar dynasties, these ruling families must be examined in order to find a chronological link. The most ancient members of the first dynasty, i.e. Ir'ib-Ba'la and his brother Igmil-Dagān (see *fig. 2*), are principal witnesses in FK 6, which depicts a tribute (*arana*) paid by the Emarite king Li'mi-šarra –son of Ir'ib-Ba'la– presumably to the Hurrian king. If the first dynasty coincided with the time of Mitannian rule, the texts concerning its members must have been written before the arrival of Šuppiluliuma ca. 1325, and even before the Ekalte tablets were written.

Yaṣi-Dagān, son of IŠKUR-kabar, is believed to have been the first active king of the second dynasty. His son IŠKUR-kabar I succeeded him, followed in turn by Pilsu-Dagān (see *fig. 3*). The controversial Zū-Aštarti seems to have briefly succeeded the latter before

17 Werner (2004: 22) is more skeptical and admits the possibility of the existence of a local dynasty in Ekalte, independent from the Emarite one, in spite of the lack of a palace.

18 On the other hand, if we argue the existence of an independent Ekaltian dynasty, we should note that the name ^dIŠKUR-kabar would have been shared by both dynasties. Given the proximity between both settlements and their common cultural context, this option should not be discarded.

the throne was recovered by Elli, son of Pilsu-Dagān. Finally, IŠKUR-kabar II, son of Elli, is the last documented king of Emar (Cohen, d'Alfonso, 2008: 9-11, 25; Table 7).

It is important to remember that the ownership of cylinder seal MBQ III 4585 = E2a, attested in Ek 25, is ascribed to IŠKUR-kabar, Yaši-Dagān's father (Werner, 2004: 23; see also Beyer, 2001: 208-209: seals E2a-E2d), who is not presumed to have reigned but is the head of the royal house.

Despite the presence of more Emar kings named IŠKUR-kabar, the identity of IŠKUR-kabar I, son of Yaši-Dagān and father of Pilsu-Dagān, is hereby proposed as the most appropriate to match the Ekaltian IŠKUR-kabar. This is due to the proximity in time with Pilsu-Dagān's reign, suspected to be contemporary with some Ekalte tablets, as discussed below (section 3)¹⁹. Hence, king ^dIŠKUR-kabar attested in Ek 1 and Ek 24 could have been Pilsu-Dagān's father.

2.1.2. Yaḥṣi-Ba'la

There are some attestations of the PN Yaḥṣi-Ba'la at Emar²⁰, none of which seems to correspond to the king documented in Ekalte. King Yaḥṣi-Ba'la is attested in Ek 9 and Ek 70, two tablets which present some original features worth to mention. Both texts include some Hurrian PNs, scarcely attested in the rest of the Ekalte corpus. In addition, the tablets include a curse against any possible offender in which the gods are summoned to erect a standing stone (*sikkānum*) at the offender's house (Ek 9:26-30; Ek 70:14-19). This clause appears in only two more tablets from Tall Munbāqa (Ek 2:26-29; Ek 61:25-27). Thus, Ek 9 and Ek 70 could have been written as early as the time of Hurrian dominance over the land of Aštata and, hence, they could belong to the earliest tablets in the corpus. If this is correct, Yaḥṣi-Ba'la could have belonged to the first dynasty of Emar. He could be either a descendant of the last king of this dynasty, named Zū-Ba'la (see *fig. 2*), any of whose successors is not known to us, or even a predecessor of another first dynasty ruler of whom no information has prevailed.

Interestingly, a connection between Ek 70 and two of the oldest texts from Ekalte – namely Ek 62 and Ek 80²¹ – could be established, since Yaḥṣi-Ba'la's royal seal is impressed on both Ek 62 and Ek 70 (Werner, 2004: 21-22). In addition, Yaḥṣi-Ba'la had a son named

19 Conversely, Fleming (2008: 32, n. 17) proposes that the eponym year attested in Ek 80, similar to the dating system used by the Emarite scribes from the first dynasty, is a clue to date the whole Ekalte corpus back to the first Emar royal house. This would make IŠKUR-kabar be identified with the Emar first IŠKUR-kabar or even with a previous namesake, in a context where the royal family took names that traditionally carried royal weight in the city. However, note that Fleming follows Skaist's reading IŠKUR-malik for the name of the first king of the royal house, IŠKUR-kabar.

20 See CD-ROM: 408, 424.

21 In accordance with Fleming (2008: 37, n. 33), Ek 80 –the tablet which contains the abovementioned, polemic eponym in l. 32– and Ek 62 present several similarities uncommon to the rest of the Ekalte corpus. Solans (2011a: 260) notices how similar the witness lists of both texts are, whereas a vast majority of the individuals included in them are absent from the rest of the whole archive. She also states that the two tablets are the only public land sales in which the seal of Ba'laka is not used. Furthermore, they bear up to five (Ek 62) and six (Ek 80) different cylinder seal impressions. Such concurrence of seals at the same tablet is extremely uncommon in Tall Munbāqa tablets. Likewise, some of the usual contract clauses present some original features in Ek 62 and Ek 80, as is the formula “as a total price” (*a-na ŠÁM ga-am-ri*, Ek 62:10; Ek 80:12), which occurs in only two other early Emar Syrian texts (E 153, RE 34). The usual formula is *a-na ŠÁM TIL.LA* at the rest of both archives. An interesting case occurs in Azû, where the scribe redundantly wrote [*a-na ŠÁJM TIL.LA ka-am-ri*] (Had 5:10).

Zū-Ba'la (Ek 9:35-36)²², the same PN as that of the last known king from the first dynasty, Zū-Ba'la. This encourages linking this king to the Emar first dynasty as a ruler unknown up to date, although more information is needed to decide his position in the family tree²³.

2.2. Zū-Ba'la in Ek 28: A King from Emar?

There is a possibility that the last known king of Emar's first dynasty, namely Zū-Ba'la, could be also attested in the Ekalte texts. Ek 28:17 shows one Zū-Ba'la, son of Išši-Dagān, as the first witness of a slave purchase²⁴. His heading position at the witness list, usually reserved for the king of Emar, together with some other clues which will now be detailed, leads to think that this could actually be an attestation of Zū-Ba'la, son of Išbi-Dagān²⁵. This Zū-Ba'la is not to be confused with the abovementioned Zū-Ba'la, son of Yaḥši-Ba'la.

Mayer's reading of the first sign in l. 18 [LÚ] is more likely to fill the existing gap than a hypothetical LUGAL, since the latter sign does not seem to fit neither the sign traces nor the narrow gap preceding the name of the city (^{URU}E-mar^{KI}). Besides, the first dynasty kings are seldom referred to as LUGAL. Therefore, LÚ would remark a high position held by Zū-Ba'la in Emar, meaning "ruler" rather than "citizen"²⁶.

The Hurrian context in which Ek 28 appears to have been written supports this identification. The tablet is almost the only one of the corpus containing Hurrian PNs, including the scribe's name, Tulpi-šarri. This scribe, in turn, does not appear in any other Ekalte tablet. In addition, Ek 28:16 shows an eponym date which follows the abovementioned formula used by Emarite scribes²⁷. This, together with the lack of repetitions of the individuals depicted in Ek 28 in the rest of the Ekalte corpus, leads to propose that the tablet was written in Emar, where the agreement would have also taken place. In fact, this would explain why the individual Ḫinna-Addu, who is giving his son as a servant "to save him from hunger", is explicitly described as Ekaltian citizen in l. 2. If the tablet had been written in Ekalte, such specification would be pointless.

The Hurrian reminiscences of Ek 28 would make it one of the earliest tablets of the Ekalte corpus. They also support the theory that the Zū-Ba'la mentioned in Ek 28:17 could

22 See Mayer, 2001: 66.

23 A last option regards the possibility that, prior to Šuppiluliuma's arrival and his establishing the second dynasty in Emar, different royal houses governed Emar and Ekalte. This could be supported by the fact that the first dynasty kings are scarcely mentioned as such. In addition, Yaḥši-Ba'la's seal is not attested in any text from Emar, whereas the dynastic seal from the second royal house is attested in Ekalte. Therefore, this theory would ascribe a ruling house to Ekalte prior to the Hittite overcome and contemporary with Emar's first dynasty. Admittedly, Emar would have no jurisdiction over the rest of Aštata before Šuppiluliuma's conquest, and Yaḥši-Ba'la would belong to this theoretical Ekalte dynasty. However, this theory is impossible to prove at this point. On this, see Pruzsinszky, 2009b: 426.

24 IGI Zu-Ba-aḫ-la DUMU Iš-ši-^dDa-gan [LÚ] ^{URU}E-mar^{KI} "Witness: Zū-Ba'la, son of Išši-Dagān, citizen/ruler of Emar".

25 The writing Iš-ši was possibly due to a scribal mistake. The lack of evidence of an alternative writing for this PN prevents from definitely confirming this hypothesis, although a possible explanation could be found in the Hurrian nature of the scribe Tulpi-šarri, who might have been unused to certain local traditions and writing styles. In fact, his unusual writing for the name of Ekalte (^{URU}I-kal-te^{KI}, Ek 28:2) seems to confirm that Tulpi-šarri was not a local scribe. It would perhaps be tempting to propose the alternative reading Iš-bi-^dDa-gan for Išbi-Dagān, given the similarity between the signs šī and bī. However, this reading is not likely, since the PN Išbi-DN in Ekalte and Emar is permanently found written Iš-bi-^dDN and never Iš-bi-^dDN. See CD-ROM: 517-520.

26 The meaning "ruler" for LÚ is widely attested in Mari, Alalāḫ, and the Amarna letters. See *amīlu 4d* (in relation to a city). CAD A/II: 57.

27 MU^{KAM} mAr-nu-bar DUMU Šu-li-ia, "Year of Arnubar, son of Šuliya".

be the last king of Emar's first dynasty, since his reign is supposed to have coincided with the last years of Hurrian domination and Šuppiluliuma's conquest. Thus, it would represent a *terminus post quem* indicator for the chronological span of the Ekalte tablets. In addition, the text contains some interesting spellings, like the word-ending mimation in several words (see Ek 28:1-5) or the spelling of *inaddin* (*i-na-an-din*), where the assimilation *nd=dd* does not occur.

Regardless, more evidence is needed to confirm with total certainty that the Zū-Ba'la, son of Išši-Dagān mentioned in Ek 28:17 is actually the Emarite king Zū-Ba'la, son of Išbi-Dagān. The hypothesis, however, would provide clear evidence for the chronology of the corpus. It would also supply new material for the study of the overlapping situation between the two dynasties of Emar, since the last king of the first dynasty (Zū-Ba'la) and one king of the second (IŠKUR-kabar I) could be found in the Ekalte texts.

2.3. The mayor Ba'la-malik

A last, quite interesting detail is to be found in Ek 48:37 and Ek 79:6-9, where a mayor named Ba'la-malik, son of IŠKUR-kabar, is documented²⁸:

Ek 48 – Public real estate sale

³⁶ IGI ^mMaš-ru-ḥa-mi-iš ^{LÚ}DUB.SAR [(.....)]

³⁷ [*i-na*] *u₄-mi* 1 MU ša ^mdEN-*ma-lik*
^{LÚ}[ḥa-za-an-nu]

³⁸ [(.....)] *ṭup-pu ša-ṭe₄-er*

³⁶ Witness: Mašrû-ḥamiš, scribe. [(.....)]

³⁷ [On] the day of the 1st year of Ba'la-malik,
[ḥazannu],

³⁸ [(.....)] the tablet is written.

Ek 79 – Private real estate sale

⁶ [*i-na* x MU ša ^mdEN-*ma-lik*] DUMU
^dIŠKUR-GAL

⁷ [*i-na* KÁ.GAL[?] ^{URU}E-ka] *ṭe^{KI}ṭup-pu ša-ṭe₄-er*

⁸ [IGI ^dEN-*ma*]-*lik* DUMU ^dIŠKUR-GAL

⁹ [^{LÚ}ḥa-za-a] *n-nu*

⁶ [In the x year of Ba'la-malik], son of IŠKUR-kabar,

⁷ [in the town gate of Ekal] *ṭe* the tablet is written.

⁸ [Witness: Ba'la-ma]lik, son of IŠKUR-kabar,

⁹ [ḥaza] *nnu*.

Adamthwaite proposes that the sons of the Emarite kings could have been entitled mayors (*ḥazannu*) not only in Emar, but also in other towns in the vicinity. Adamthwaite found up to three *ḥazannū* whose names coincided with some members of the Emarite royal family, i.e. Abī-Rašap, Aḥī-malik, and Pilsu-Dagān (Adamthwaite, 2001: 29-30). Unfortunately, mayors attested in Emar are not many; besides, some of them are unattested elsewhere and cannot be linked to the royal family²⁹. Abī-Rašap and Aḥī-malik are the names of two brothers of king Pilsu-Dagān. One of them, namely Aḥī-malik, appears in conjunction with Pilsu-Dagān in E 253, what supports this theory; in contrast, the *ḥazannu* Abī-Rašap cannot be securely linked to his namesake in the royal family³⁰.

Among Pilsu-Dagān's many other brothers (see *fig. 2*), all of them sons of his predecessor IŠKUR-kabar I (^dIŠKUR-GAL), Ba'la-malik (^dEN-*ma-lik*) could match the *ḥazannu* attested

²⁸ Note that the mayor's name in Ek 79 is poorly preserved.

²⁹ Some of the mayors from Emar appear in the texts alongside their respective king, but cannot be confirmed as members of the royal family, since no namesakes in it are attested. This is the case of Ba'la-belū (E 150, RE 91), Dagān-ma (RE 16), Ir'ibu (E 157), Kānu (SMEA 4), and Mūtu (RE 24).

³⁰ Adamthwaite (2001: 30) suggests that Aḥī-malik is Pilsu-Dagān's younger brother, although he admits that conclusive evidence is lacking.

in Ekalte. This Ba'la-malik could have been the mayor of Ekalte during the reign of his brother Pilsu-Dagān and the mayorship of Aḫī-malik in Emar. Ba'la-malik belongs to the third generation of Emar's second dynasty and is explicitly mentioned as IŠKUR-kabar I's son in E 11:39; E 125:27; E 126:24 (EN-*ma-lik*); RE 71:26 (^d1+EN-*li-ma-lik*); TSBR 5:46 (^dEN-*ma-lik*); and TSBR 6:27 (1+EN-*ma-lik*)³¹. Consequently, out of the three kings named IŠKUR-kabar in Emar, the Ekaltian IŠKUR-kabar analyzed above could refer to the one who preceded Pilsu-Dagān (see *fig. 3*).

Therefore, one of the mayors from Ekalte, namely Ba'la-malik, son of IŠKUR-kabar, could actually be the same person as the Emarite Ba'la-malik, son of IŠKUR-kabar I and brother of Pilsu-Dagān, king of Emar. The latter would have reigned at the capital of Aštata while his brother Ba'la-malik occupied the post of *ḫazannu* in the nearby town of Ekalte. This adds weight to Adamthwaite's theory, given that it would imply that some members of the royal family of Emar were awarded, either traditionally or occasionally, the role of *ḫazannu* all over the land of Aštata³².

Finally, we are to notice that Ek 48, one of the tablets in which the *ḫazannu* Ba'la-malik is attested, was written by the scribe Mašrû-ḫamiš, who could be present at the Emar archive at the time of king Pilsu-Dagān, representing the best evidence for a chronological match between the archives of Ekalte and Emar, as will be now considered.

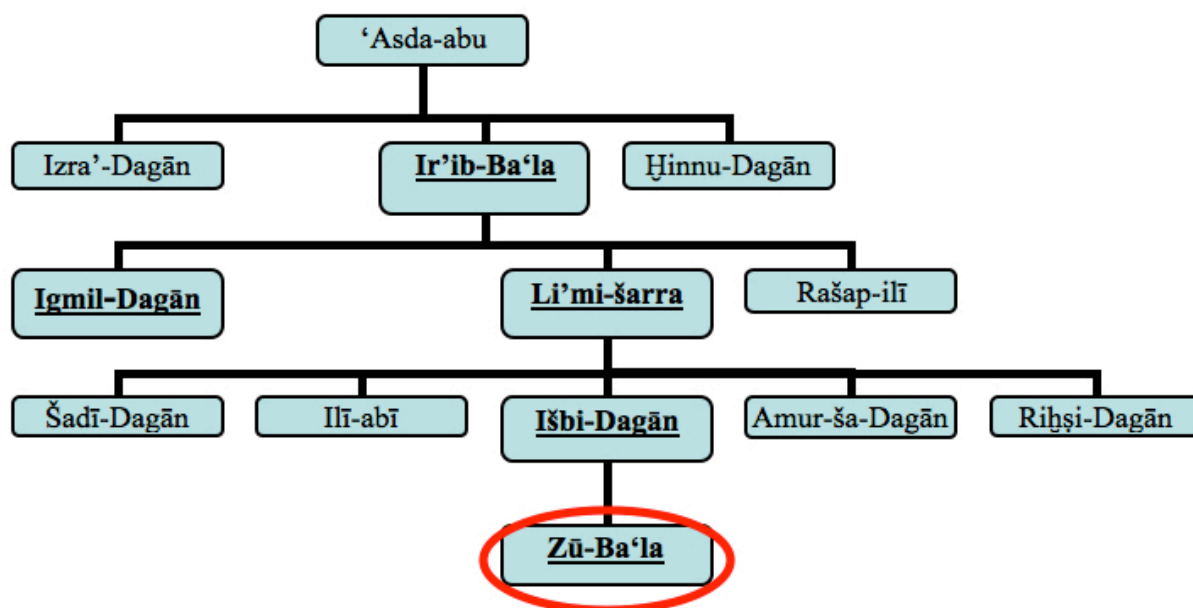


Fig. 2: The First Dynasty of Emar (source: Cohen, d'Alfonso, 2008: 5). Members suspected to be attested in Ekalte are encircled

31 See CD-ROM: 191-193.

32 The fact that there are indicators not only in Emar but also in Ekalte is quite significant. Furthermore, that a member of the Emarite royal family occupied a high position among the local hierarchy would confirm the political submission of Ekalte with regard to Emar.

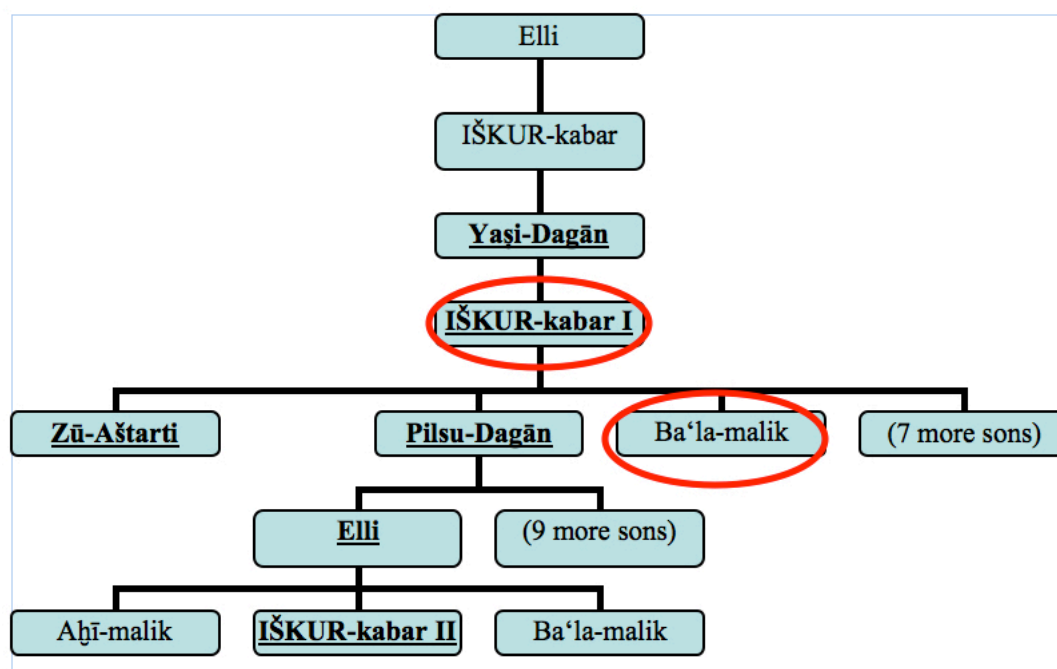


Fig. 3: The Second Dynasty of Emar (source: Viano, 2007: 252). Members suspected to be attested in Ekalte are encircled

3. THE SCRIBE MAŠRÛ-ḪAMIŠ

The PN Mašrû-ḫamiš occurs twice in Ekalte, both times as a scribe's name (Ek 45:31; Ek 48:36). Significantly, other scribe named Mašrû-ḫamiš is documented at a few Emar texts. It is my purpose to find out whether these namesakes were actually the same person or not, in order to establish a link between the Ekalte and Emar tablets.

Firstly, no special information is supplied by the Ekalte texts, apart from Mašrû-ḫamiš being explicitly mentioned as scribe in both Ek 45 and Ek 48. The latter, significantly, mentions the aforesaid mayor Ba'la-malik. The situation becomes more interesting if we analyze the information from Emar at our disposal. The PN Mašrû-ḫamiš appears in three tablets: TSBR 47 and TSBR 50 –both of which he wrote–, and E 146, in which Mašrû-ḫamiš, son of Ba'la-bārû, purchases a field from the Elders³³. Arnaud claims that Mašrû-ḫamiš also wrote TSBR 48 and TSBR 51 and that this scribe followed different patterns than the scribal practice from Emar³⁴. There is other scribe named Mašrû-ḫe (E 161:20') who is also stated not only as son of Ba'la-bārû, but as diviner of the god Ba'la of the king and the town, as well (HCCT-E 10:14,31-32). Cohen has merged both Mašrû-ḫamiš and Mašrû-ḫe into the same person, given that *-ḫe* is the shortened form for *-ḫamiš*³⁵.

33 A.ŠÀ ša dNIN.URTA KI dNIN.URTA ù LÚ.MEŠ šī-bu-ut^{URU}E-mar^{KI} be-lu-ú A.ŠÀ mMaš-ru-ḫa-mi-iš DUMU dIŠKUR-MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD a-na 1 me-at KÙ.BABBAR-pí ŠÁM.TIL.LA A.ŠÀ i-ša-am. (E 146:10-17). On the reading of both PN's, cf. CD-ROM: 207, 613 and Arnaud 1985-1987/3: 159.

34 "[...] ses tablettes 47-48 (écrites par le même scribe: qu'on compare 48 et 50) paraissent bien étrangères aux pratiques notariales d'Emar. Une liste de témoins identiques et la même 'main' apparentent étroitement 50-51 à 47-48. Sans doute proviennent-ils du même endroit", Arnaud, 1991: 13. See also Cohen, 2009: 123.

35 Cohen, 2009: 39-40 and, more recently, Cohen, 2010: 36. Shortened PN's are common in Emar, Ekalte, and Azû.

In HCCT-E 10:29-37, the king Pilsu-Dagān, thankful for the diviner Mašrû-ḥamiš's prediction that the town of Emar would repel an attack committed by Hurrian troops, gave him a field as a reward³⁶. TSB 48:33 also mentions the "years of hardship", a reference to the Hurrian attack, as an event from the past³⁷.

Ba'la-bārû, Mašrû-ḥamiš's father, was also a diviner. Apart from the aforesaid texts, the PN Ba'la-bārû is attested in E 604-2.2:3,4 and Orient 23/2:356 (^m IŠKUR-MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD. GÍD). Both texts refer to him as diviner (^{LÚ}.ZU) and also as a scribe in Orient 23/2³⁸.

Considering that they shared the same profession and that they are the only samples of the PN Mašrû-ḥamiš in each archive, both Mašrû-ḥamiš from Emar and Ekalte must have actually been the same person. It seems unlikely that all these similarities be simply coincidental³⁹. Consequently, a comparison between the tablets written by both the Emarite Mašrû-ḥamiš (E 161, TSB 47, TSB 48, TSB 50, and TSB 51) and his Ekaltian namesake (Ek 45 and Ek 48) must be carried out. Regrettably, few aspects from them are remarkable and none seems to be definitive, although they will be listed as follows.

Ek 48:21-22 and TSB 47:21-22 contain the formulaic expression *ur-ra-am še-ra-am*, with word-final mimation; on the contrary, *ur-ra še-ra-am* is read in TSB 51:13. Ek 48:1 contains the term *mēreštu* (*me-re-šu*, "cultivated"), a word which is not attested elsewhere in Ekalte but can be found in four Emar tablets⁴⁰. Likewise, the unit of measure *matāḥū*, which appears in Ek 45:4 is unattested in the rest of the Ekalte corpus, whereas it is sporadically recorded in Emar (Mori, 2003: 104-105, 137; Adamthwaite, 2001: 158-162; Pentti, 2001: 123). Also in Ek 48:6, the formula *ru-up-šu* for "its width", which unattested elsewhere in Ekalte but present at Emar⁴¹, may appear again in E 161:3, although the final sign of the word is lost. So is the spelling for the same word in Ek 45:4, although the formula *ru-up-šu* seems feasible.

The rare spelling *i-sa-am* for the verbal form "he has purchased" is used by Mašrû-ḥamiš in Ek 45:21 and Ek 48:20 instead of the expected *i-ša-am*; this contrasts with TSB 51:11, where the form *i-ša-am-mu* can be read. The other real estate sale tablet, E 161, is broken and the passage where the verb tense should be found (l. 11) is lost. Nevertheless, the rare *i-sa-am* instead of *i-ša-am* occurs not only in Ekalte, but also in Emar (AuOrS1 5:43, E 11:28) and Azû (Had 1:18). Had 1 was written by Pazûrî-Dagān, a scribe also attested in Ekalte who used *i-ša-am* in Ek 74:19; Had 2:25; and Had 9:15. Therefore, some scribes such as Mašrû-ḥamiš and Pazûrî-Dagān did not consistently write /s/ for the expected /š/. According to Ikeda, the reason is that some specific scribes were unable to distinguish /s/ from /š/ (Ikeda, 1995: 40-41). In the same line, Whiting suggests that the local dialect could have had some inherent confusion of /s/ and /š/, resulting in the occasional use of graphic {s} for {š} in Akkadian words⁴².

36 *i-nu-ma ERIM^{MEŠ} ḥur-ri BÂD^{URU} E-mar^{KI} il-mi ù^m Maš-ru-ḥé^{LÚ} IŠKUR-MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD ša LUGAL-ri ù^{KI} URU^{KI} ù^m ba-ru-tu₄-šu ik-šu-du₄-ma ù^m Píl-su-^dDa-gan LUGAL-ru A.ŠÀ an-ni-um a-na NÍG.BA qí-iš-ti-šu id-di-na-aš-šu.*

37 ^mYa-aḥ-ši-EN ¹Wa-a-e AMA-šu i-na MU.ḪI.A-ti dan-na-ti it-ta-na-bal-ši [...] "Yaḥṣi Ba'la maintained his mother Wae in the years of hardship [...]" (TSB 48:31-34).

38 See CD-ROM: 207.

39 In addition, Mašrû is attested as a divinity [^dMaš-ru-(u)] in the PN Yaši-Mašrû (Ek 60:7; Ek 74:30), what reveals a hitherto unknown deity from the Middle Euphrates pantheon. In fact, it is included in the Ekalte pantheon by Mayer (2001: 23). The DN Mašrû is very rare in PNs throughout the Ekalte and Emar archives (see CD-ROM: 613), what increases the possibility of a prosopographic match between both namesakes.

40 E 3; E 116; E 147; TSB 55. Mori, 2003: 134.

41 The usual forms for "its width" in Ekalte are *ru-pu(-us)-su/à* or *ru-up-sú/à*. Sallaberger, 2003: 277-278. See also Ikeda, 1995: 46.

42 See Had 1 (<http://www.helsinki.fi/~whiting/hadid01.html>), n. 18.

Remarkably, two scribes attested in different archives in Aštata (Mašrû-ḫamiš in Ekalte and Emar; Pazūrī-Dagān in Ekalte and Azû) and, hence, also the best evidence to establish a secure chronological link for the three corpora, shared the same graphic inconsistency⁴³.

Prosopography, in turn, yields little evidence. Only a couple of PNs can be found in tablets from each site: Aḫī-mi (*A-ḫi-mi*: Ek 48:31; TSB 50:30; TSB 51:27)⁴⁴ and Še'i-Dagān (*Še-i-dDa-gan*: Ek 45:7,11,13,15; TSB 51:29,31; *Še-i-dKUR*: Ek 45:11)⁴⁵. The same formula *Pīl-sú* for the PNs Pilsu (Ek 48:4,7) and Pilsu-Dagān (TSB 47:25) seems also worth to mention.

Finally, Ek 48:37 contains an eponym year, unfrequent at the Ekalte tablets. The same text mentions the *ḫazannu* Ba'la-malik, suspected to be one of the sons of the Emarite king IŠKUR-kabar I, predecessor of Pilsu-Dagān (see *above*). This could confirm that both the Ekaltian and the Emarite Mašrû-ḫamiš were the same individual.

If both the Emarite and the Ekaltian Mašrû-ḫamiš are the same person, a chronological link between the Emar Syrian tablets and the Ekalte texts could be established. This could also help us determine more precisely the time when both groups of tablets were written, thanks to the frustrated Hurrian attack against the city of Emar. The attack could have implied the plundering of Ekalte, as the destruction layer covering the tablet-giving stratum at Tall Munbāqa seems to indicate.

This identification would connect the Ekalte texts with the reign of the Emarite king Pilsu-Dagān, who was in charge when the Hurrian siege took place. According to Cohen and d'Alfonso, Pilsu-Dagān reigned in Emar ca. 1300-1280, being contemporary to the Hittite kings Muršili II and Muwatalli II, as well as to the Karkemiš viceroy Šaḫurunuwā (Cohen, d'Alfonso, 2008: 24-25). The Emar siege mentioned in HCCT-E 10 appears in three more texts, namely TSB 9:21-22, E 42:9-10, and RE 77:34-35⁴⁶. According to Skaist, a series of Hurrian raids on Hittite territory took place shortly before or after Ḫattušili III acceded to the throne. The said attacks would have been instigated by the Assyrian king Adad-nirārī I. The latter had gained Mitanni's vassalage and wanted to annoy the Hittites, albeit not in a

43 Furthermore, the interchangeability between /s/ and /š/ is also noticed in Ek 79:13 (*sa-te₄-er* instead of expected *ša-te₄-er* "it is written"). Ek 79 includes the name of the abovementioned *ḫazannu* Ba'la-malik, who could be a member of the Emar royal family. The scribe of Ek 79 is unknown, but one is tempted to speculate and wonder whether Mašrû-ḫamiš could have also written this text.

44 This PN is frequently found in Emar, written either *A-ḫi-mi* or *A-ḫi-mi*. However, the spelling used by Mašrû-ḫamiš is most commonly used (see CD-ROM: 97-99). There is no way to discern whether the two Aḫī-mi attested in Ek 48:31 and TSB 50:30 are actually the same person or not, since one of them is attested as father and the other is attested as son.

45 Mašrû-ḫamiš used the symbol KUR for Dagān, a practice more typical of Syro-Hittite scribes (see Cohen, 2009: 96). This supports linking the Ekaltian and the Emarite Mašrû-ḫamiš, since the latter belongs to the generation where Syro-Hittite texts were introduced. The PN Še'i-Dagān is also frequently found in Emar, written in both ways, although *Še-i-dKUR* is majoritarilly recorded in Syro-Hittite texts. See CD-ROM: 744-747.

46 *i-na KÚR-KÚR KAL-ti ša Ḫur-ri BÂD il-mi-ma* "When there was serious enmity and the Hurrians surrounded the wall" (TSB 9:21-22); LUGAL ÉRIN^{MEŠ} KUR^{MEŠ} *Ḫur-ri URU E-mar i-la-mi-in* "The king of the Hurrian troops harmed Emar" (E 42:9-10); MU^{KAM} LUGAL ERIM^{MEŠ} *Ḫur-[ri] URU E-mar^K i-la-mi-in* "The year when the king of the Hurrian troops harmed Emar" (RE 77:34-35). Vita, 2002: 117-119.

direct manner⁴⁷. Admittedly, the Emar siege must have taken place before the Assyrian king Salmanassar I put the Hurrian kingdom to an end⁴⁸.

Following Cohen and d'Alfonso's chronology for Pilsu-Dagān's reign, Emar must have been sieged during the first two decades of the 13th century. If Ekalte was destroyed in the same attack, the Ekalte texts would be located between the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 13th centuries, what would fit the first proposal by Werner commented above (ca. 1340-1265 BC).

Werner rejected this option because of the lack of Syro-Hittite-type tablets in Ekalte. However, a vast majority of the high number of attestations of king Pilsu-Dagān are found in Syrian-type documents, even though Pilsu-Dagān's kingship took place when Emar was already under the influence of Ḫatti. Only two Syro-Hittite tablets (E 42 and Iraq54 5, both probably dating from Elli's reign) mention Pilsu-Dagān⁴⁹. Therefore, in spite of being already under Hittite control, Ḫatti's cultural influx had not yet been imposed to the territories of Aštata during Pilsu-Dagān's reign. This would probably be due to the considerable autonomy allowed to the area, under the administrative control of Karkemiš.

Moreover, one of the two Syro-Hittite tablets which mention Pilsu-Dagān refer to the Hurrian siege of the town in the past. Thus, it would be due to the Hurrian attacks on the Euphrates borderline that the Hittites decided to strengthen their control and influence over the whole area. This would have caused an immediate, clearer, and deeper cultural influx on social life in Emar. The siege and subsequent control strengthening would have coincided with the last years of Pilsu-Dagān's reign, probably becoming more effective by the time of his successors⁵⁰.

4. A CHRONOLOGICAL PROPOSAL: THE EMAR SIEGE AND THE END OF EKALTE

Firstly, it is important to confirm that the Ekalte tablets were written later than previously proposed. Not only the mention of king Tudḫaliya in Ek 80:32 is unlikely, but similarities to Emar Syrian tablets lead to conclude that both archives were much closer in time, even contemporary. Thus, it is necessary to contrast the clues from Ekalte analyzed above with the Emar chronological data.

Šuppiluliuma would be responsible for the change of dynasties in Emar, as he did with a number of kings of submitted territories. Zū-Ba'la of the first dynasty would have been replaced by Yaši-Dagān of the second (see *figs. 2 & 3*). Assuming that Yaši-Dagān was appointed by Šuppiluliuma ca. 1325, the earliest tablets of the Emar archive would have

47 A letter (KBo I 14) supposedly sent to the Assyrian king Adad-nirārī I by Ḫattušili III describes the attacks perpetrated by the "men of Turira" on Hittite soil. Turira, possibly located in the Ḫabur triangle, is supposed to be the capital of what remained of Ḫanigalbat. Skaist, 1998: 64-68. The Hurrian raids could also be part of the uprisings which Muršili II had to face in the borders of his inherited empire and which might have even caused him a temporary loss of control over Karkemiš. Kuhrt, 1995: 290; Pérez Largacha, 2006: 293.

48 Skaist, 1998: 64-68. On the other hand, authors like Vita (2002: 119-121) propose the Hurrians to be linked to the Tukulti-Ninurta epoch. Note, however, the chronological differences with Cohen, d'Alfonso, 2008: if Pilsu-Dagān's reign is to be dated around the beginning of the 13th century, it would not be possible to establish a chronological link with Tukulti-Ninurta's reign, which developed as late as the 2nd half of the century. To add to matters, Cancik-Kirschbaum (2008: 93-95) is reluctant to accept that Assyrians would have been the instigators of the Hurrian attack.

49 See CD-ROM: 668-677.

50 It is very interesting to note that Zū-Aštarti's short reign is attested almost exclusively in Syro-Hittite-type tablets, whereas his immediate successor Elli is mostly mentioned in Syrian-type texts. See CD-ROM: 311-317, 831-840.

been written by 1400-1380 –four generations back from the Hittite campaign (Skaist, 1998: 64; see also Cohen, d'Alfonso, 2008: 20). Syro-Hittite tablets have been estimated to date from ca. 1270 until the fall of the town, ca. 1175. Since no tablets from Tall Munbāqa belong to the Syro-Hittite-type, the Ekalte archive predates 1270.

In addition, given that a high number of tablets from the era of the Emar Second dynasty are of Syrian type, and that the second dynasty was installed by Šuppiluliuma himself, there is no reason why the Ekalte texts should not be contemporary with Šuppiluliuma, as well – subsequently, also with the Emar Syrian tablets.

This could explain why the destruction layer that covers the tablet-giving stratum at Tall Munbāqa –and which allegedly caused the sudden abandon of the settlement–, seems to predate the definitive destruction of Emar, since no Syro-Hittite tablets have been found in Ekalte. The destruction layer at Tall Munbāqa is to be explained by means of the Hurrian military incursions which took place during Pilsu-Dagān's reign, years after Šuppiluliuma's campaigns, and which caused the ineffective siege of Emar.

After resisting the attack, the citizens of Emar resumed its existence in an apparently normal daily life, referring to the traumatic episode as the “years of war and hardship”. A profound acculturation process with the Hittite authorities followed, perhaps due to a military and administrative reinforcement once Ḫattuša understood that new incursions had to be avoided by strengthening the Eastern frontier territories of the empire⁵¹. In contrast, Ekalte would have not resisted the Hurrian *razzias*; hence the lack of any Hittite influx or references to the “years of war and hardship” in the archive.

The main clue to confirm this chronological theory is based on the identity of the scribe Mašrû-Ḫamiš, author of Ek 45 and Ek 48. He is strongly believed to be the same person as his namesake at Emar, also a scribe and afterwards diviner of the city who lived during Pilsu-Dagān's reign. Indeed, the Emarite Mašrû-Ḫamiš was smothered with attentions by the king himself after predicting Emar's victory at the siege.

Obviously, it is possible that there was no relationship whatsoever between the Emarite and the Ekaltian Mašrû-Ḫamiš. However, it seems difficult to admit that the two namesakes were not the same person, since

- a) they are the only examples of this rare PN in both archives;
- b) they shared the same profession;
- c) a son of the king IŠKUR-kabar I is presumably attested in Ek 48 as mayor of the town (a direct relation to Pilsu-Dagān, who knew the Emarite Mašrû-Ḫamiš;
- d) Mašrû-Ḫamiš presents a curious interchangeability between the sounds /s/ and /š/, a feature shared with Pāzūrī-Dagān, who is attested in Azû and Ekalte. These two scribes could have belonged to the same scribal school, and could have even been part of the Emar royal entourage.

Considering that the Ekaltian Mašrû-Ḫamiš is attested exclusively as scribe and not as diviner, Ek 45 and Ek 48 would have been written prior to his appointment as diviner in Emar and shortly before the military attack in which Ekalte was destroyed. Therefore, the destruction of Ekalte would have occurred at a time close to the appearance of Syro-Hittite type tablets in the area. The possible presence of members of the Emar second dynasty in Ekalte, namely Ba'la-malik (Ek 48) and the king IŠKUR-kabar I (Ek 1 and Ek 24) –brother and father of Pilsu-Dagān, respectively–, support this theory. Consequently, both Ek 45 and Ek 48 would belong to the latest documents of the Ekalte archive.

⁵¹ The previous lack of Hittite effective control agrees with the political vacuum after the fall of Mitanni described by Gromova (2007: 307), which would have been replaced by local rulers until the Hittites decided to exert an effective control of the territory from the viceroyalty of Karkemiš.

In sum, I propose the following chronological limits for the Ekalte corpus:

–*Terminus post quem*: around 60-80 years before Pilsu-Dagān's reign and, perhaps, some years before Zū-Ba'la's, as well (ca. 1335-1330). The latter appears as witness in the *arana* documents and could also be present in Ek 28, a text full of Hurrian PN's. The king named Yaḥṣi-Ba'la could be a hitherto unknown member of the Emar first dynasty (see fig. 4). Yaḥṣi-Ba'la is either a predecessor or an immediate successor of Zū-Ba'la, to be ascribed to the politically convulsed period of a change of dynasties.

–*Terminus ante quem*: some time during Pilsu-Dagān's reign (ca. 1300-1280), possibly before the scribe Mašrû-ḥamiš was appointed diviner. This dating explains the destruction layer over the Ekalte tablet-giving stratum by means of the Hurrian military attacks attested in Emar, which suffered and repelled a siege. Since Pilsu-Dagān is known to have overcome the siege, the end of the Ekalte archive is to be situated before the end of this king's rule. Since Cohen and d'Alfonso date the Emar siege back to 1300-1280, the destruction of Ekalte should be placed in that temporary span, as well.

Year	Emar Dynasties		Events/Archives
1400 - 1300	<p>–<i>1st dynasty</i>– Ir'ib-Ba'la ca. ?-1370 Igmil-Dagān</p> <p>Li'mi-šarra</p> <p>Išbi-Dagān Zū-Ba'la ca. 1335-1325 Yahsi-Ba'la?? (Ekalte)</p>	<p>–<i>2nd dynasty</i>–</p> <p>IŠKUR-kabar (did not reign)</p> <p>Yaši-Dagān ca. 1325-1320 IŠKUR-kabar I (Ekalte)? ca. 1320-1300</p>	<p>Emar Syrian tablets ca. 1400-1380 Ekalte Syrian tablets ca. 1380</p> <p>Šuppiluliuma ca. 1325 (Karkemiš Viceroyalty)</p>
1300 - 1200		<p>Abbanu? Pilsu-Dagān ca. 1300-1280 Zū-Aštarti Elli ca. 1280-1260</p> <p>IŠKUR-kabar II</p>	<p>End of Ekalte Archive Emar Siege ca. 1280</p> <p>Emar Syro-Hittite tablets ca. 1270</p>
1200- 1175			End of Emar Archive ca. 1175

Fig. 4: Chronological chart of the Ekalte and Emar archives

Conclusively, the Ekalte archive should be located at a chronological span running from ca. 1350 to ca. 1280. Thus, the texts should be considered contemporary with the Syrian-type tablets from Emar. Likewise, the fifteen texts from Tall Hadidi/Azû, no doubt contemporary

with the Ekalte tablets⁵², are to be chronologically linked to the Emar Syrian texts, as well⁵³. In my opinion, the three archives share the same chronological context.

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52 Up to four specific individuals are attested in the documents from both Ekalte and Azû. One of them is Pazûrî-Dagân, scribe from Azû, who appears in Ek 74:37 and Ek 75:51, as well as in Had 1:32; Had 2:37; and Had 9:31. The second is Ḫuzāmu, son of Abî-ḫamiš, who appears as a witness in Had 1:28 and Ek 75:46. The third is Nûrî, son of Dagân-tillatî, attested in Ek 74:27 and Had 4:30. Finally, a scribe named Kunûrîš (Had 5:29) could be the same scribe that appears in Ek 43:34; Ek 63:2'; and Ek 69:7.

53 Excavation activities at the archaeological site of ancient Karkemiš were restarted in 2011 by the joint Italian-Turkish team led by N. Marchetti (Bologna University). Hopefully, new documents which can corroborate this theory, and bring about some new light on Ekalte and its fate- will be discovered.

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